Assessment of losses caused to crops in Northern India

2608. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made an assessment of the losses caused to crops in the northern States due to severe cold conditions and hailstorm during the winter of 2006-07;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and

(c) whether any Central assistance has been provided to the affected farmers, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Expansion of agricultural land

2609. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that agricultural land restricted to 140 million hectare land across the country could be expanded to an additional 100 million hectares by improving vast stretches of barren and desolate land;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the present status of land under each crop?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) As per available estimates, the agricultural land/net sown area has been 141.16 million ha. in 2000-01 and 141.60 million ha. in 2005-06 in the country. The total cultivable land in the country is 182.57 million ha in 2005-06, consisting of net sown area (141.60 million ha.), current fallows (14.03 million ha.), fallow lands other than current fallows (10.41 million ha.), cultivable wastelands (13.16 million ha.) and land under miscellaneous tree crops and groves (3.37 million ha.). During the same year, the area put to non-agricultural uses is 24.94 million ha. and barren and uncultivable land are 17.50 million ha. The barren lands cannot be developed economically- for agricultural purposes, however it can be utilized for non-agricultural purposes.

Government of India is implementing various programmes namely, (i) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Area (NWDPRA), (ii) Soil Conservation for Enhancing the Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River (RVP and FPR), (iii) Reclamation of Alkali Soil (RAS), (iv) Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA), (v) Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), (vi) Desert Development Programme (DDP), (vii) Integrated Waste-land Development Project (IWDP) for development of degraded lands in the country. Under the above programmes, since inception upto end of Tenth Five Year Plan, an area of 50.83 million hectare has been developed. Part of such developed land is also brought under cultivation to maintain balance in different type of land uses.

(c) The present status of land under each crop for the year 2000-01 to 2004-05 in the country is enclosed as a Statement.